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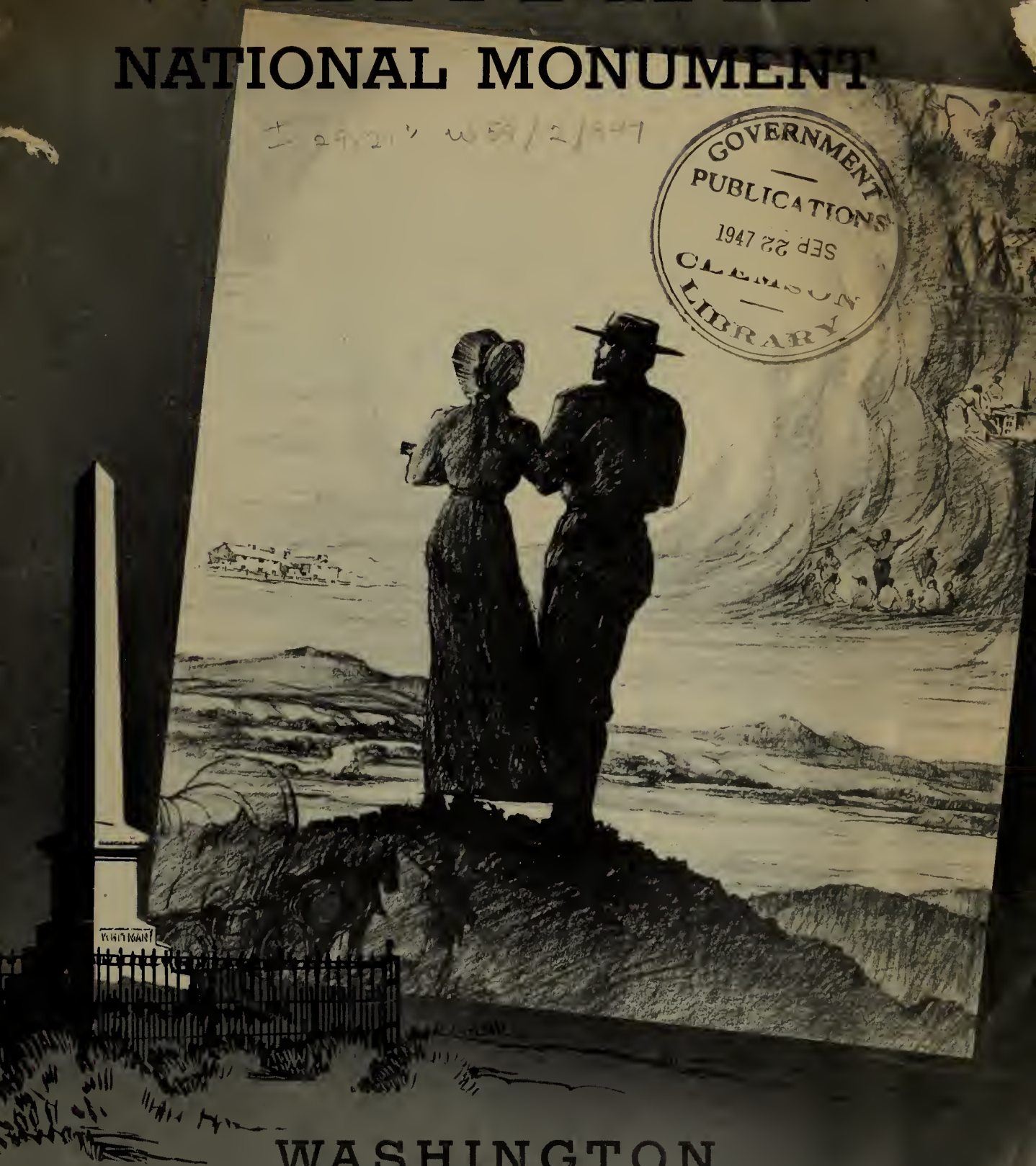

WASHINGTON

The Whitman Mission site today. Looking southeast, the trees in right center are on the site of the "Mission House." The dikes of the millpond are to the right of the horses in left center.

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THE COVER

Symbolical sketch of Dr. and Mrs. Marcus Whitman approaching Waiilatpu, the scene of their mission endeavors among the Cayuse Indians, 1836–1847. The background scenes portray various aspects in the history of the mission—buildings, religious instruction and teaching, domestic life, and agriculture. (Drawing by Cecil J. Doty, Architect, National Park Service.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
J. A. KRUG, *Secretary*
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NEWTON B. DRURY, *Director*

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WHITMAN NATIONAL MONUMENT

Dr. Marcus Whitman and his wife, Narcissa—martyred in 1847—here ministered to the spiritual and physical needs of the Cayuse Indians and the immigrants of the Oregon Trail

WAIILATPU, the site of the mission founded in 1836 by Dr. Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss Whitman, his wife, was one of the noteworthy landmarks on the Oregon Trail. There the Whitmans symbolized the noblest of the pioneers who colonized the West. Through their self-sacrifice and devotion to duty, the germ of Christianity was given to a heathen people, and the first Protestant church west of the Rocky Mountains was founded. By their patience and example, the rudiments of agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, and letters were taught. Kind and generous, they offered a haven to the traveler. Their courage and faith were confirmed by the fact that they were willing to give up their lives in order that an enlightened people might survive them. Through their indomitable spirit, energy, and determination, the American civilization was carried to remote regions and thus contributed to our settlement of the West. As hallowed ground of the past, this mission site, established as a national monument by act of Congress in 1936, reminds us of our debt to these pioneers.

American Missionary Interest in Oregon

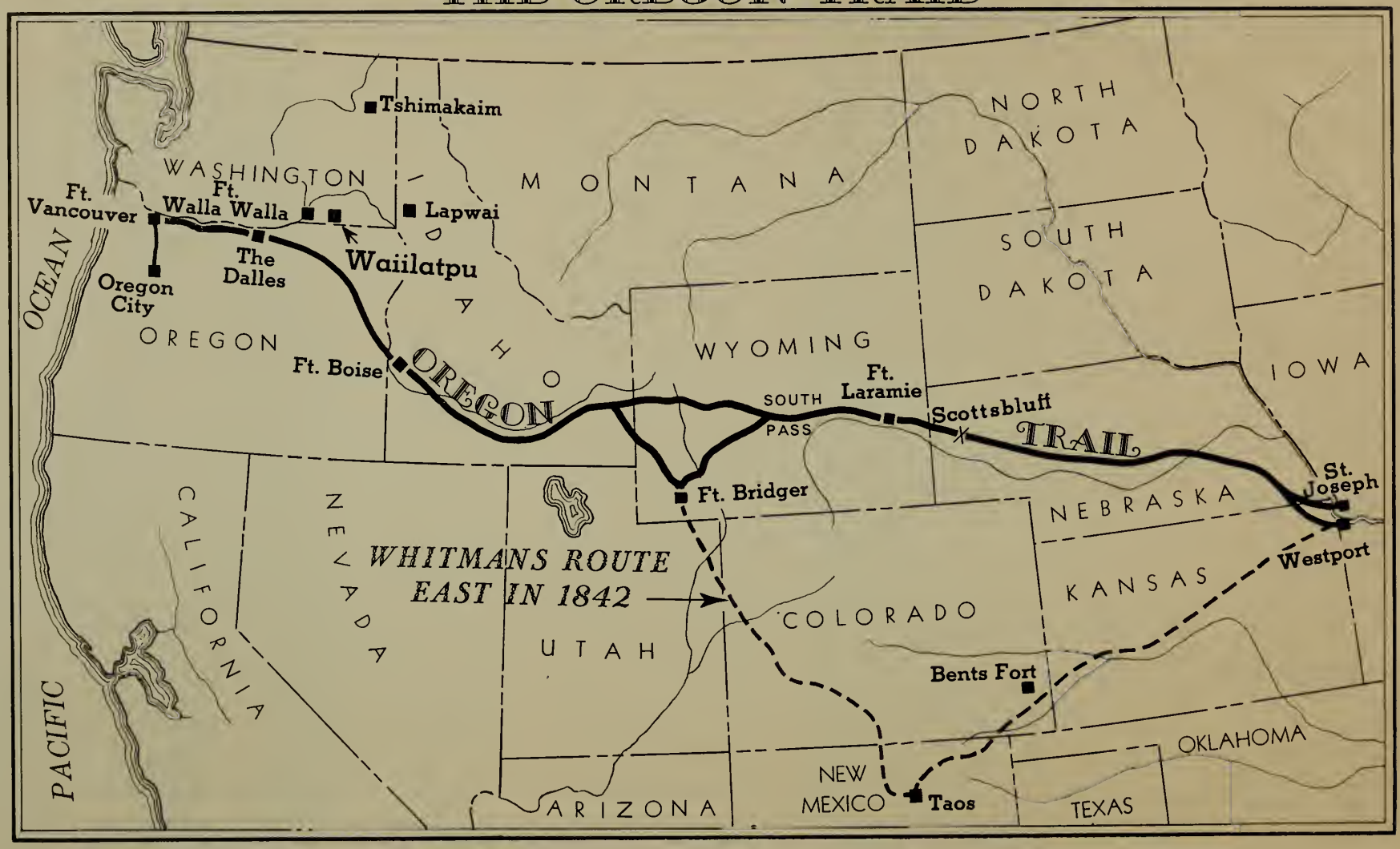
UNTIL THE TREATY OF 1846 finally resolved the differences of the nations that claimed the "Oregon Country" and extended the boundary of the United States along the 49th parallel to the Pacific Ocean, that region lying west of the Rocky Mountains and between Mexican California and Russian Alaska was in a sense "No-Man's Land." In 1818, a treaty of "Joint Occupancy" left the Oregon country open to nationals of the United States and Great Britain alike. Shortly thereafter, in 1819, Spain gave up her claims to the region north of 42°; and by the treaties of St. Petersburg in 1824 and 1825 Russia relinquished her claims south of 54°40′.

American claims to the Oregon country were based upon the discovery of the Columbia River by Robert Gray (1792), the explorations of Lewis and Clark (1803–1806), establishment of fur-trading posts by Astor's Pacific Fur Company (1811), and the relinquishment of Spanish rights to the coast north of 42° by the Adams-Onís Treaty for the Purchase of Florida (1819). Although it was recognized that the control of Oregon rested in the hands of the powerful

Artist's conception of Waiilatpu in 1847, looking from the south.

SKETCH MAP OF

THE OREGON TRAIL



British Hudson's Bay Company, the interest of the United States in the region by the 1820's was not entirely lacking. American traders, adventurers, and explorers had reported on the country; and as early as 1829 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent the Reverend Jonathan Greene to investigate the potentialities of Oregon as a field for Protestant missionary activity.

Missionary interest was actually fired into action by the publication in the New York *Christian Advocate and Journal* for March 1833 of an account of the visit to St. Louis by a delegation of Flathead and Nez Perce Indians from west of the Rocky Mountains asking for Christian teachers. The American Board, organized by the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in 1812, and supported by the Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed Churches, soon found candidates ready to enter this far-off field. Among the most willing was Dr. Marcus Whitman, who enlisted with the Board as a medical missionary. Whitman, born at Rushville, N. Y., on September 4, 1802, was well prepared for his work, having been granted a medical degree in 1832 by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Western District of New York.

In the spring of 1835, Whitman accompanied the Reverend Samuel Parker to the American fur traders' rendezvous on the Green River, in what is now western Wyoming. After talks with the Nez Perce and Flathead Indians there, these advance agents were convinced of the promise of the missionary field. It was agreed that while Parker continued his explorations westward Whitman should return East to arrange for the immediate establishment of a mission among the Flathead and Nez Perce.

The Whitmans Head Westward

ARRIVING in New York with two Indian boys, Whitman obtained speedy approval of his plans by the Board in Boston. In March 1836, accompanied by Narcissa Prentiss Whitman (another applicant in the field, whom he married on February 18, 1836), the Reverend Henry H. Spalding and his wife, Eliza Hart Spalding, and the two Indian boys, Whitman set out for Oregon. W. H. Gray, a lay member, joined them on the way.

Most people in the eastern part of the United States in the 1830's regarded the West as wild and dangerous country, to be entered by only the most venturesome. The chances for permanent settlement appeared remote. Granted that settlement was possible, it seemed an impossible task to transport women and children in wagons across the so-called "Great American Desert," west of the Mississippi River. Thus, it was an occasion of some historical importance when it was decided to send missionaries with their wives across the continent to establish missions among the Indians of the Oregon country. Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding, the first American women to cross the continent, seemed unaware of the momentous nature of their undertaking. The women considered the trip more in the nature of a call to duty which overshadowed any idea of adventure.

The 1,900-mile journey westward from New York to Liberty, Mo., partly by steamboat, was comparatively easy. The next half of the journey by land to Fort Walla Walla, some 30 miles west of the modern city of Walla Walla, Wash., proved more difficult. Averaging 15 to 30 miles a day, the little party ascended the Platte River and finally reached the fur traders' rendezvous on the Green River. Traveling in two wagons, they carried with them a variety of seeds for gardens, and drove a small herd of cattle. Fortunately, they were able to make a large part of their journey in company with fur trappers of the American Fur Company.

At the rendezvous the white women were a sensation. Most of the Indians there had never seen white

The confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia Rivers. Here was located Fort Walla Walla, which the Whitmans reached on September 1, 1836.

women before, and it had been years since many of the white fur trappers had seen any. Using the time and occasion to good advantage, Whitman and Spalding held religious services to which the trappers thronged. At this same rendezvous, the Nez Perce and Flathead reiterated their desire for the missionaries to teach them.

Having reached the rendezvous on the Green River with only the smaller of the two wagons—one had been left at Fort Laramie (southeastern Wyoming)—the Whitmans and Spaldings continued westward with traders of the Hudson's Bay Company. One of the chiefs of the Nez Perce Indians, Tachensuates by name, also went with them.

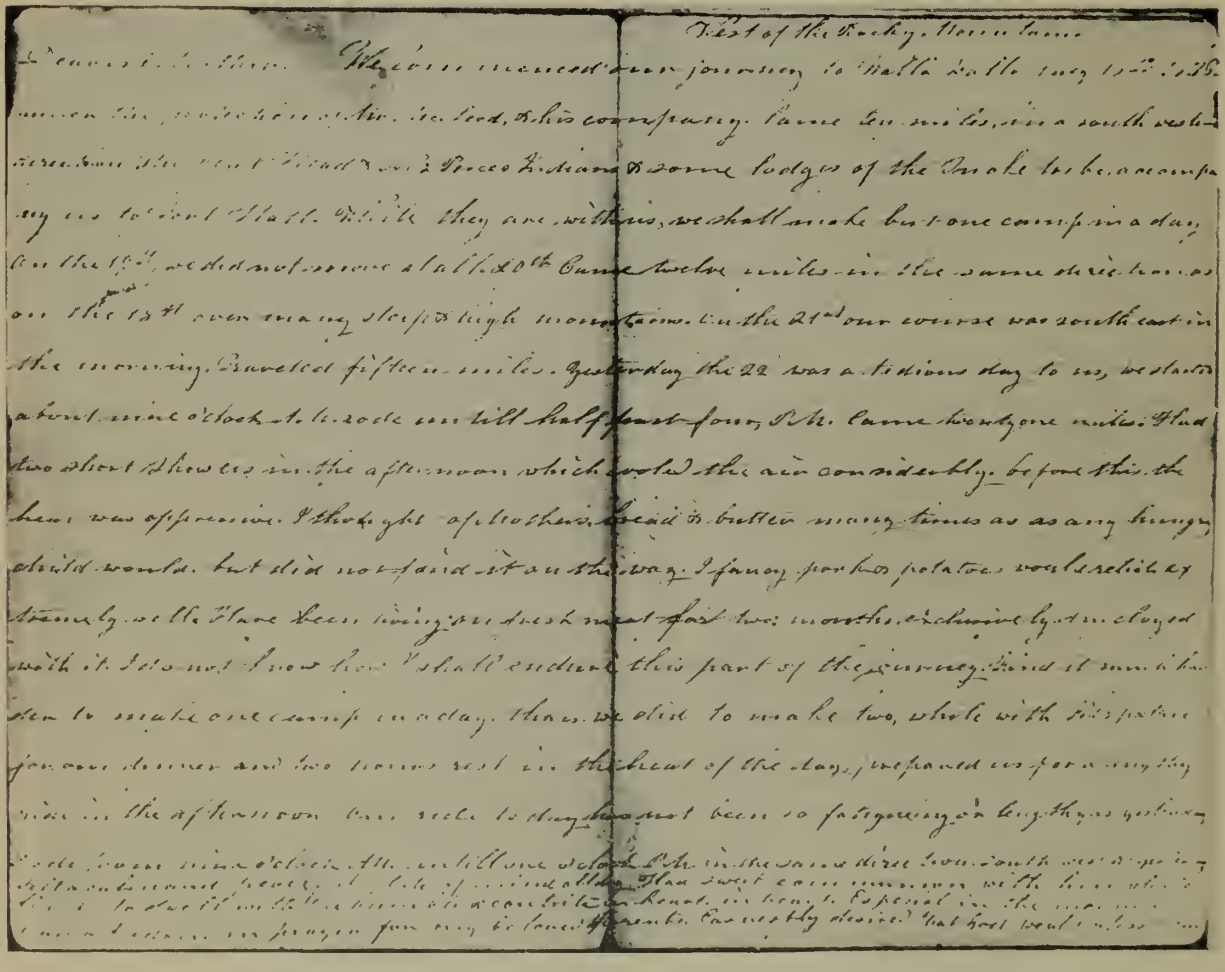
The way became increasingly difficult. Often the heavily laden wagon overturned and was righted only with great effort. Frequently the little party found it necessary to discard supplies to lighten the load. Finally the front axle broke. After converting the back wheels into a cart, they passed Fort Hall and reached Fort Boise in Idaho, where they were forced to abandon it. Although unable to take wagons all the way to the Columbia, the Whitmans and the Spaldings had succeeded in extending a wagon route many miles farther west than anyone had done before.

The New Life Begins

THE WHITMANS reached Fort Walla Walla, at the confluence of the Columbia and Walla Walla Rivers, on September 1, 1836; and the Spaldings arrived with the cattle on September 3. They were now at the Columbia River, the symbol of their long-cherished dreams. At Fort Walla Walla they were hospitably received by Pierre Pambrun, the trader of the Hudson's Bay Company; and after resting for a few days, they were sent by him in a boat down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver, now the site of Vancouver, Wash., which they reached on September 12. There they were entertained by Dr. John McLoughlin, the chief factor, who was high in his praise of the first American women to cross the continent.

While their wives stayed at Fort Vancouver, Whitman and Spalding retraced their steps up the Columbia to establish their missions. Whitman, on McLough-

The first page of Narcissa Whitman's diary of her trip westward in 1836.



lin's advice, decided to settle among the Cayuse Indians at Waiilatpu, "Place of Rye Grass," about 25 miles up the Walla Walla River from Fort Walla Walla, and Spalding at Lapwai among the Nez Perce near the junction of Lapwai Creek and Clearwater River, about 10 miles east of the present Lewiston, Idaho. Spalding remained with Whitman at Waiilatpu until November 22, when he, Mrs. Spalding, and Gray journeyed on to Lapwai. A house 30 by 36 feet had been partly built at Waiilatpu, the log lean-to, part of which was sufficiently finished to provide two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a pantry. Housekeeping was begun by the Whitmans on December 10.

By the summer of 1837, Dr. Whitman had 16 acres planted—2 acres in peas, 12 in corn, and 2 in potatoes. The virgin soil gave bountiful return, and he was able to repay the Hudson's Bay Company much of what they had provided him the previous fall. The section of the house adjoining the lean-to had been completed by filling in the wooden framework with adobe bricks. In this building Alice Clarissa Whitman was born on March 14, 1837. The first American girl born west of the Rocky Mountains, she proved a being of great interest to the Indians, who had never before seen white women, much less a new-born white child. Becoming fond of her, they called her "Cayuse tenni" (Cayuse Girl), because she had been born on Cayuse land.

Meanwhile, some progress had been made in educating the Indians. The Cayuse, eager to learn, attended a small school conducted by Mrs. Whitman. After some months, the missionaries mastered enough of the native language to carry on a limited conversation. Many of the Indians were persuaded to attend Sunday religious meetings. Perhaps the greatest stride was made, however, when the Cayuse began to plant their own crops. As Dr. Whitman soon learned, the teaching of agriculture was an essential preliminary to the christianizing of the Indians. The interest of the Indians who took up the work soon increased the demand for hoes and plows beyond the available supply.

In August 1838, several missionary reinforcements arrived from the East. These were the Reverends Cushing Eells and Elkanah Walker and their wives, who established a mission at Tshimakain, about 30 miles northwest of present-day Spokane; the Reverend Asa B. Smith and his wife, who established one at Kamiah, some 70 miles east of Lapwai on the Clearwater River; and Mrs. W. H. Gray, who with her husband remained at Waiilatpu. Dr. Whitman, responsible for the sick in all four missions, sometimes found it necessary to ride more than 150 miles to visit a patient. On the eve of the arrival of these reinforcements, the first Protestant Church west of the Rocky Mountains was founded at Waiilatpu on August 18, 1838. After these additions to the mission community arrived, the Columbia Maternal Association, the first woman's club on the Pacific Coast, was also organized.

In the fall of 1838 a new and larger house was constructed at Waiilatpu. This was on higher ground about 75 feet north of the one built earlier. The first house had been found to be dangerously close to the river and subject to partial inundation from floods. The new house, constructed of adobe walls 18 inches thick, was shaped like a capital "T." The dimensions (later enlarged) were 19 by 40 feet for the front, and 22 by 30 feet for the ell. The roof was of poles covered with straw and about 8 inches of dirt.

Despite their progress at Waiilatpu, the Whitmans suffered the inconveniences and sorrows of the frontier. In addition to the terrible isolation, the difficulties connected with correspondence with the East, and the uncertain wanderings of the Indians, most of what they raised went to help out the other missions as well as the Indians. At times, they resorted to eating horse meat because of the lack of other food. Their greatest sorrow was experienced with the drowning of their 2-year-old daughter, Alice Clarissa, on June 23, 1839, in the Walla Walla River, not far from the house.

Rye grass still grows on the mission site, which the Indians called Waiilatpu, "Place of the Rye Grass."

The Walla Walla River south of the site of Whitman's Mission.

Troubled Days at the Mission

By 1840, affairs had assumed a fairly even pattern at Waiilatpu. Whitman, however, in writing to the Reverend David Greene, Secretary of the American Board, in March 1840, recorded a growing change in the attitude of the Cayuse. Not only were the Indians exhibiting a "spirit of independence" but, as Whitman wrote: "They appear . . . that it *was* to accommodate *us* that they plant and cultivate their lands."

Nevertheless, some progress was made in teaching. During the winter Mrs. Whitman had had an average of 10 pupils; and with the return of most of the Indians during the spring, from 30 to 50 were in attendance, with both Dr. Whitman and his wife teaching. To aid them in their work, a book had been printed for instruction purposes. This, an edition of 800 copies and containing 52 pages, was written by Messrs. Smith and Cornelius Rogers in the Nez Perce language. An improvement over an earlier edition written by Spalding, it was printed at Lapwai.

An event of considerable importance in Oregon Trail history occurred in 1840 with the trek of the first wagons to the Columbia River Valley. To accomplish the feat, Messrs. Newell, Wilkins, Craig, and Meek, all former trappers, were forced to remove the wagon beds, which hampered progress of the wagons through the tall sagebrush. The men, exhausted when they reached Waiilatpu, expressed regret at having undertaken to bring the wagons. Whitman, however, realizing the importance of the deed, exclaimed: "O you will never regret it. You have broken the ice, and when others see that wagons have passed they too will pass, and in a few years the valley will be full of people." The wagoners went on to the Willamette Valley, and were among the first Americans to settle there. Events already signaled the approach of the great Oregon Trail migration.

The location of Waiilatpu, so near to Fort Walla Walla, made it convenient for travelers to stop at the mission. Because of this, Whitman, after 1841, was faced with a growing number of visitors. He was forced to take care of their wants, thereby depleting his own resources.

The difficulties at the mission were emphasized in complaints sent to the American Board by various individuals. Lack of harmony also existed among the missionaries. Smith, discouraged because of ill health and poor results at Kamiah, had written in August 1839 complaining of the few Indians to be converted. Gray was discontented over his failure to secure a separate mission and wrote favoring the closing of the mission at Waiilatpu. Spalding expressed for a time a spirit of noncooperation, largely because of antagonism toward Mrs. Whitman, who, it was said, had rejected his hand in marriage several years prior to coming west.

The Indians themselves were becoming troublesome. The "spirit of independence" noted by Whitman in the spring of 1840 was increasing. By 1841 they had openly insulted the whites at Waiilatpu on more than one occasion. Once when Gray was working on a building, they demanded pay for the wood and timber he was using. At other times they pastured their horses in the corn and potato fields. On one of these occasions one of the Indians struck Dr. Whitman twice when he remonstrated.

During a meeting at Fort Walla Walla on October 4, 1841, Archibald McKinlay, who had succeeded Pambrun, threatened not to trade with the Cayuse if

they persisted in bothering the Whitmans. Furthermore, he indicated that he would send to Fort Vancouver to have them punished by armed forces under Dr. McLoughlin. The Indians promised to behave in the future, and during another meeting with Whitman, on October 5, they agreed not to try to force payment for the lands and wood used by the mission.

Whitman Rides East

BECAUSE of dissension among the members of the Oregon missions, and rival operations of Methodists, Catholics, and the Hudson's Bay Company, but particularly on account of financial difficulties resulting from the panic of 1837, the American Board in February 1842 decided to reduce the Oregon missions. The stations at Waiilatpu and Lapwai were to be abandoned, Whitman was to be transferred to Tshimakain, and Spalding was to be recalled.

The missionaries had settled their differences, however, in a meeting in June 1842, before the receipt of the Board's orders. On receiving them, another meeting was called, during which Whitman volunteered to represent their cause in person before the Board in Boston. Undaunted by the fact that much of his trip would be made in the most severe part of the winter, he set out on October 2 with A. L. Lovejoy, a recent immigrant.

The two men found it necessary, because of unfriendly tribes on the South Pass route, to make a long detour southward, past Fort Uintah in Utah, and across southwestern Colorado to Taos, N. Mex. Near what is now Gunnison, Colo., they nearly lost their lives fording the Colorado River. In the mountainous country near Taos their food gave out. After eating their pack mules and, finally, their dog, they were near starvation. Fortunately, a party of hunters discovered them and they were led safely to Taos. From there they proceeded to Bent's Fort in southeastern Colorado, where Whitman left Lovejoy. The Doctor reached Westport, Mo., on February 15, 1843, and Boston on March 30, after short visits in Washington, D. C., and New York.

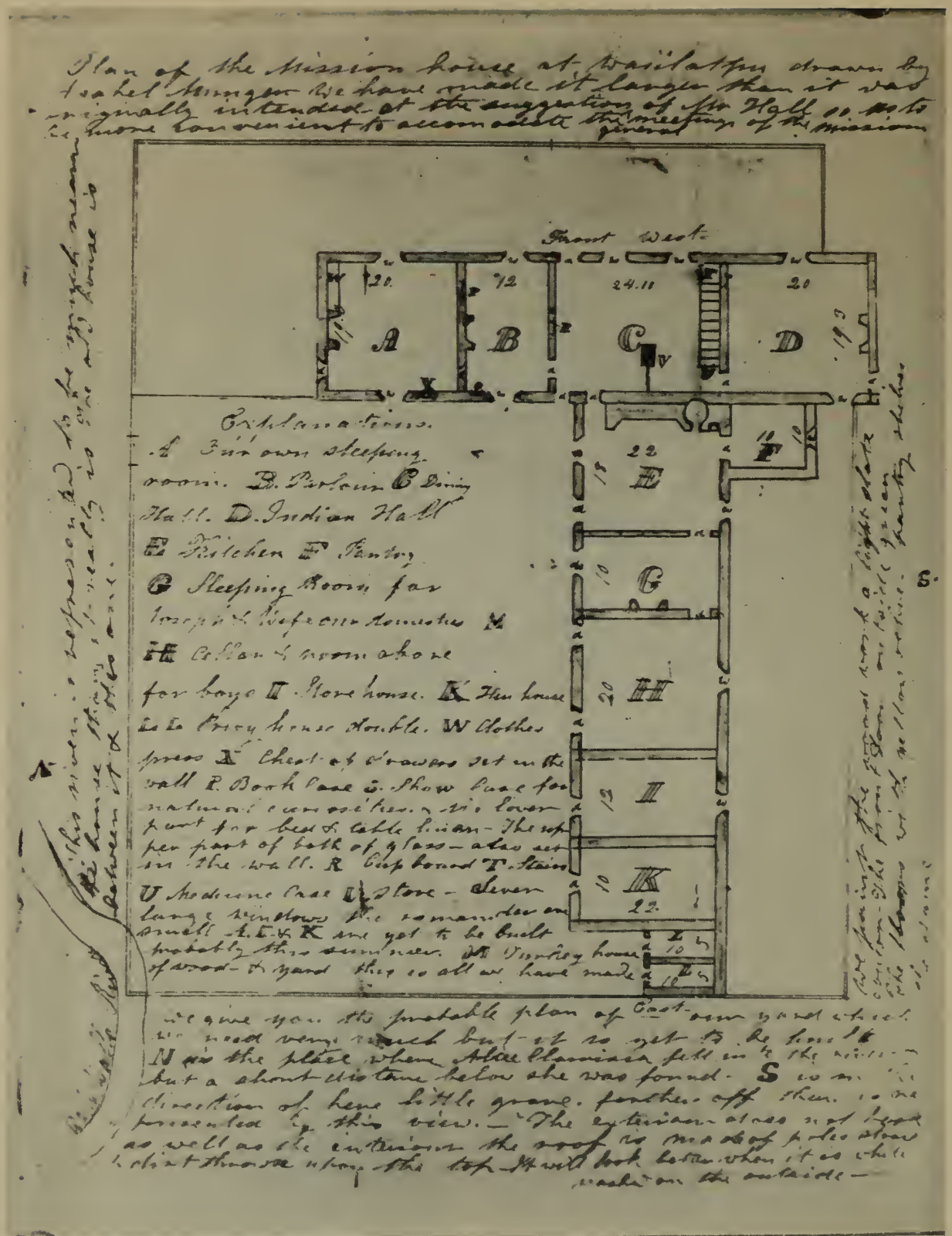
According to a letter of Dr. Whitman, he called on Secretary of War Porter while in Washington. Judging by the contents of a bill that Whitman prepared, but which was never introduced in Congress, he urged upon the Secretary the necessity for the Government to establish a chain of forts along the Oregon Trail, and suggested the establishment of a pony express along this route, some 17 years before the famed Pony Express became a reality.

The American Board, after hearing Whitman's evidence, canceled its order for the dismissal of Spalding and the closing of Waiilatpu and Lapwai. His business accomplished, Whitman was anxious to get back to his wife and mission. After spending a brief time with relatives, he headed for St. Louis, arriving there early in May with his 13-year-old nephew, Perrin Whitman.

The Immigration of 1843

SOME 1,000 immigrants had assembled near Independence, Mo., to take part in what was then the largest group to attempt the trip to Oregon. Some were dubious as to the feasibility of taking wagons all the way to the Columbia. Whitman, who had decided to join them, assured them that they could. On May 22 the trek began, with the long line of Conestoga wagons, horses, and cattle stretching into the distance. At first, the high spirits of the party were reflected in their frequent singing, joking, and laughter. But, after weeks of travel, even the young were quiet and subdued. Twelve to 15 miles was a good day's journey. Often progress was much slower. Many, wanting to stop and rest, were urged by Whitman to go on. He was praised, not only for his services as a guide but also for the time he spent ministering to the sick, often at night after the fatigue of a hard day's march.

The first printing press in the Northwest, used to print books at Lapwai Mission for the Indians at Waiilatpu. *(Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society.)*



Narcissa Whitman sent this proposed plan of the Mission House to her mother in 1840. Actually, the plan was not followed in all details. *{Courtesy of the Whitman College Museum.}*

At Fort Hall, near the present Pocatello, Idaho, a situation arose which might have been unfortunate. The immigrants were advised by the Hudson's Bay Company there to leave their wagons and cattle at the fort and complete the journey on horseback, as the 1842 immigrants had done. This astonished Whitman, for, in 1836, he had taken a wagon more than 250 miles farther west. Furthermore, he had first-hand knowledge of the wagons that reached the Columbia in 1840. After assembling a group of immigrants, he assured them that wagons could reach the Columbia.

Thus it was that Whitman was employed to guide the train from Fort Hall to the Grande Ronde Valley, just east of Waiilatpu. At the Grande Ronde, he received a message from the Spaldings, who were seriously ill with scarlet fever, asking him to attend. Feeling the urgency of the message, he placed the immigrants in charge of a faithful Indian, named Stikus, who guided them over the Blue Mountains and into the Columbia River Valley. Part of the train reached Waiilatpu during early October while Whitman was away. A Mr. Geiger, who was in charge there (Mrs. Whitman was also absent), supplied the weary travelers with fresh vegetables and other provisions until the food stores were nearly exhausted. Some of the immigrants objected because of the high prices. Others broke into Whitman's house and stole his supplies.

The significance of the 1843 immigration can hardly be overestimated in its effect on retaining the Oregon country for the United States. Although Whitman had not been responsible for its organization, he can be given much of the credit for bringing the immigrants safely to their destination.

With the advent of the 1843 immigration, a new era dawned in Oregon. Opened to wagon traffic on a large scale, home seekers poured into the country in ever-increasing numbers. As the tide of immigration increased, however, that passing Waiilatpu ebbed. Ever seeking shorter routes, immigrants after 1844 were attracted by new trails farther to the south that bypassed Whitman's station. Nevertheless, some found Waiilatpu a supply station worthy of a detour to replenish exhausted supplies. The sick also could get medical attention, and the needy could find work that would carry them through the winter. Although the population of the mission community fluctuated with the arrival and departure of such temporary residents, its permanent personnel increased.

Growth of the Mission

Waiilatpu had grown much since Whitman had completed his house. By 1842 Gray had built a house about 400 feet due east of the main mission house. His departure from the mission that year had left the building open for the use of immigrants. Soon it came to be called the "Emigrant House." Between it and the mission house a blacksmith shop had been built as early as 1842. Here wagons could be repaired and oxen and horses shod. South of the blacksmith shop three mills had been successively built, each one larger than its predecessor, to meet the demand for flour. Whitman built the last of these largely through his own labor; and extensive earthen dikes were constructed for the millpond.

Between the mill and the blacksmith shop there was a large circular corral. It was the custom in the region to use such corrals, in place of barns, for quartering stock. Southwest of the main mission house was an orchard containing apple and peach trees. From the northwest corner of the millpond an irrigation ditch, almost 10 feet wide, made its way north of the "Emigrant House" and the "Mission House" to the fields to the west. This was the main artery to a system of moats, or ditches, which had been dug around the fields to serve as fences. With the help of some of the immigrants, rail fences were built after 1843; and a sawmill was consructed about 20 miles away on Mill Creek in the Blue Mountains. Whitman soon had 40,000 feet of cut lumber on hand, ready to replace the unsatisfactory dirt roofs with boards, and for other needed construction.

The Massacre

As we have seen, relations with the Indians became less peaceful after 1840. The Cayuse, wanting pay for their timber and land, also found the customs of the whites irritating. The Whitmans, with their strict religious code, demanded what was to the Indian

The great grave in which the victims of the massacre were interred for the third time in 1897.

National Park Service archeologists excavating the site of the grist mill in 1947.

an unreasonable standard of conduct. For instance, no one was to have more than one wife, which was contrary to the customs of the wealthier Indians. Too, men were required to perform at least an equivalent amount of work to that done by their wives. Chief Tiloukait at one time had remonstrated with Whitman for allowing Mrs. Whitman to ride behind him on horseback. His statement: "Why do you make so much of her for" illustrated the subordinate place of the Indian woman in the red man's eyes.

Other points of difference were more serious. Tribal customs decreed that a murderer should pay money or property to his victim's relatives. Otherwise, someone of equal rank among the murderer's people was marked for death. Thus, after Elijah, the son of the Walla Walla chief, Peupeumoxmox, was treacherously murdered in 1844 by a white at Sutter's Fort, Calif., the Indians long debated killing Whitman, Spalding, or one of the other missionaries in retaliation.

It seemed by 1846 that many of the apparent causes for friction had been overcome. Whitman had given the Indians until the spring of that year to make up their minds as to whether or not Mrs. Whitman and he should leave. Gaining an expression of confidence from them, he continued with his work. That September he was able to write: "I think we have had at no time been as much in the affections of the people as now. A much kinder disposition is manifested toward, us, now more than at any former period—exhibiting the feeling that they could not do without us. No abatement is seen in attention upon religious instruction and more consistent views of religion are manifested."

Throughout most of 1847 there was apparently little change. In November of that year the mission community numbered 74 persons, aside from the Indians of the vicinity. Of those at Waiilatpu, 50 were immigrants, most of whom had arrived in the 1847 immigration.

The severe winter of 1846–47 had resulted in the loss of many of the Indians' horses, rousing their discontent. The 1847 immigration had also brought with it a particularly virulent form of measles and dysentery, which swept in epidemic form over most of Oregon. It was not long before the mission was affected; and whites and Indians alike were stricken. The Indians had little resistance to these new diseases brought by the white man. Some estimate that half of the Cayuse Tribe died in the epidemic. Their habit of taking hot steam baths and then of jumping into the cold river probably killed many who might have survived otherwise.

Dr. Whitman did his best to minister to the sick. The Indians, however, could not comprehend why he was able to cure so many of his white patients, while his Indian patients usually died. Grave suspicions were aroused. These were fed by treacherous statements of the half-breed Joe Lewis that Dr. Whitman was poisoning the Indians in order that he might have their lands. To the Indians, Whitman was a "tewat," or medicine man. To cure a person poisoned by a "tewat" it was necessary to kill the "tewat."

Thus, like a bolt of lightning, tragic death struck Waiilatpu on November 29, 1847. On the fateful afternoon of that day more Indians than usual came about the mission. Unsuspecting, the whites continued their everyday activities.

About 2 o'clock two Indians came to the kitchen to ask for medicine. As Dr. Whitman talked with them, one of them apparently engaged his attention while the other crept behind him and struck him with a tomahawk. A volley of shots rang out; and John Sager, who had been winding a ball of string near the doorway, was killed as he attempted to reach for a weapon. The shots were a signal for a general attack. Kimball and Rodgers, both wounded, managed to get into the mission house. Hoffman, the only one to put up much resistance, backed into a corner, and defended himself with an axe. Several Indians surrounded him, wielding tomahawks. Finally, two Indians rode up and overreached him with long-handled tomahawks, cutting him down. Saunders tried to reach his family in the "Emigrant House" but was killed as he was climbing a fence. Before long, after killing Gillen and Marsh, the Indians broke into the mission house, where they shot Mrs. Whitman, Rodgers, and Francis Sager. Later, Kimball, wounded and hiding in the house, was killed when he attempted to go to the river for water. He had wrapped himself in a blanket, hoping to pass for an Indian, but was recognized and shot.

At the sawmill only one man was killed. This was James Young, who met his death while bringing a wagon load of lumber to the mission. The lives of the other men at the sawmill were spared, on condition that they would operate the grist mill and furnish the Indians with flour. The remaining survivors, mostly women and children, were herded into the "Emigrant House," where they were held nearly a month. During that time the Indians looted the buildings and had an almost continual feast on the supplies which the Whitmans had accumulated so laboriously for the winter. The white women, treated as slaves, were forced to cook for the Indians and to sew shirts, which the Indians highly prized.

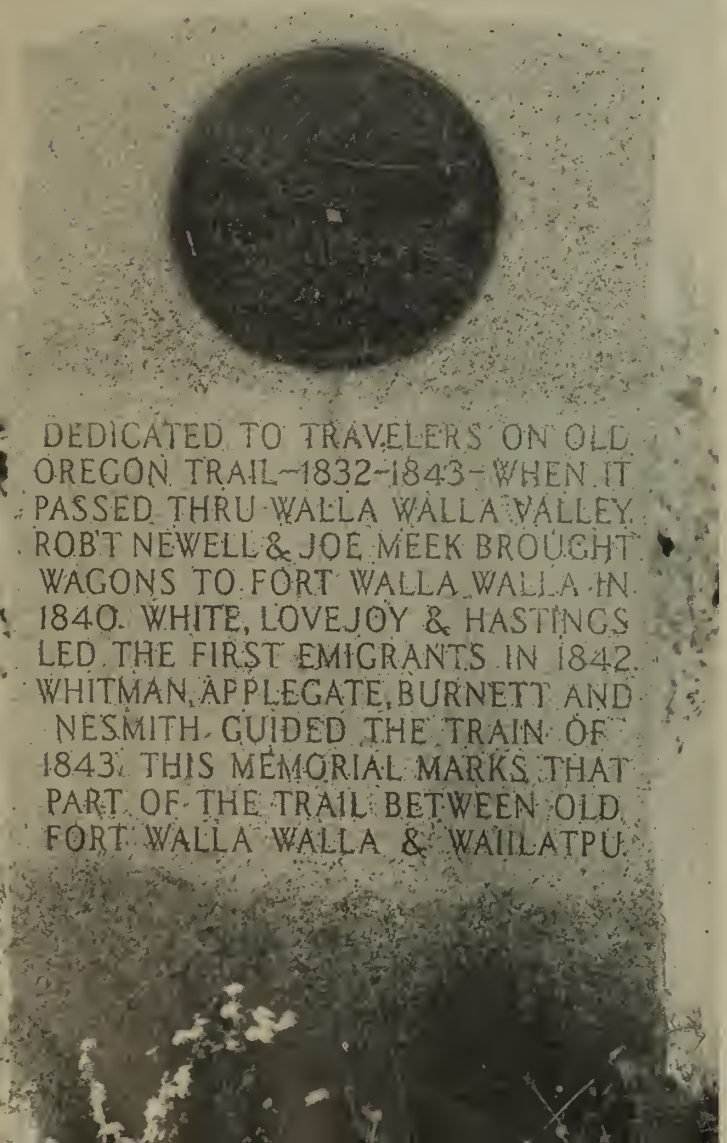
It should be noted that the treacherous attack was carried out by a minority of the Indians near Waiilatpu and that no Christian Indians were involved. In all, there were 14 victims of the massacre. Of this number, Mrs. Whitman was the only woman. Sales and Bewley, sick in bed at the time of the massacre, were killed 8 days later. Several persons escaped. Hall, running to some willows which lined the stream, hid when the shooting started, and later managed to reach Fort Walla Walla. From there he tried to reach the Willamette Valley by boat but is said to have drowned when crossing the Columbia River at the upper cascades. Canfield secreted himself in the loft of the "Emigrant House" and escaped at night, making the 125 miles to Lapwai on foot to warn Mrs. Spalding. Spalding, en route to Waiilatpu at the time of the massacre, had already been warned by a Catholic priest.

Father Brouillet, a French priest, and his interpreter stumbled onto the scene of the massacre a few days later. The priest, horrified at what he saw, felt it his duty to bury the victims. Helped by the interpreter and Joe Stanfield, whose life had been spared because he was French, Father Brouillet dug a shallow grave

Certificate granted to Whitman in 1835 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. *{Courtesy of the Whitman College Museum.}*

in which he interred the bodies. Not long after, word of the massacre reached the outside world; and Peter Skene Ogden, then chief factor at Fort Vancouver, was sent with $400 worth of trade goods to rescue the captives. Successful in his negotiations with the Indians, he reached Fort Walla Walla on December 29 with 6 men, 8 women, and 37 children who were at Waiilatpu at the time of the massacre. Two young girls, Hannah Sager and Helen Meek, had died while in captivity.

At the settlements in the Willamette, the sad news of the massacre was received with dismay. A messenger, in the person of Joe Meek, was dispatched to Washington, D. C., with news of the tragedy and a request for aid. Volunteers were enlisted and equipped to punish the guilty tribe and capture the murderers. At the scene of the tragedy they found buildings and orchards destroyed. The remains of the massacre victims, hastily buried under the direction of Father Brouillet, had been scattered over the prairie by wolves. These were reburied.



The military operations of the Oregon Volunteers failed to subdue the Cayuse, but in 1850 five Indians that had participated in the massacre were surrendered by the tribe. The accused were taken to Oregon City, Oreg., where, after a speedy trial, they were condemned and hanged. By this time, Joe Meek had returned from Washington, D. C., and acted as executioner. Meanwhile, in the fall of 1848, the Oregon bill, long before Congress in one form or another, had become law. Oregon was now the Oregon Territory. Undoubtedly, the massacre had served to speed the enactment of this legislation.

An Estimate of Whitman

ESTIMATES of Whitman's services to Oregon vary widely. The myth that he "saved Oregon" has been exploded, and historians generally agree that his labors did not alter the eventual political destiny of Oregon. We know he was interested in the aspects of its political destiny, from religious if not from purely patriotic motives. From his letters we learn that he regarded American occupation of the region as essential to the success of the Protestant missions. He wanted good pious men to come there as he believed this would aid in making his mission successful.

Whitman himself had written regarding the immigration of 1843: "Upon that event the present acquired rights of the United States hung." The bringing of white women and the taking of wagons overland seem insignificant when judged by modern standards. In the age when the events occurred, however, the first American women to go overland to Oregon set an important precedent. The bringing of the wagons of the immigrants of 1843 westward from Fort Hall to the Columbia River Valley, although not the first, proved the practicability of taking wagons to Oregon at a time when Hudson's Bay Company traders advised against this and when English papers could be quoted as follows: "However the political question between England and America as to the owners of Oregon, may be decided, Oregon will never be colonized overland from the eastern states . . .". In the history of Whitman National Monument, therefore, Whitman's achievements in these respects deserve recognition as marking important precedents for the subsequent history of the Oregon Trail on which Waiilatpu was an important station.

Oregon Trail marker near the site of the Whitman Mission.

The Mission Site Today

THE MISSION site remains much as it was 100 years ago, its pastoral simplicity keeping in spirit the atmosphere of historical agricultural activity. The river has changed its course, and runs in a new channel about one-fourth of a mile to the south. Near the old channel, archeologists have located the site of the first house (built in 1836), the main mission house, the "Emigrant House," the blacksmith shop, and the grist mill. Eventually, these sites will be excavated fully to gain information as to their dimensions and structural details. It is planned to preserve and mark what is left of the foundations; and an appropriate museum nearby will help to interpret the story of Waiilatpu.

Other points of interest are the great grave or marble vault where the massacre victims are buried, and the monument on the hill. These, constructed and dedicated in 1897 by local citizens during the fiftieth anniversary of the massacre, are imposing landmarks. The remains of the victims were transferred at that time to the marble vault from the old wagon box in which they had been buried.

Some 45 acres of the mission site were established as a national monument by Congressional action in 1936, in response to the efforts of the Whitman Centennial Incorporated to commemorate the scene of Whitman's endeavors. Preserved for posterity, it will remain as evidence that pioneer hands here carved a home in the wilderness.

The Whitman National Monument is closely allied to other important sites along the Oregon Trail. Of these, Scotts Bluff National Monument, in western Nebraska, and Fort Laramie National Monument, in eastern Wyoming, are under the administration of the National Park Service.

HOW TO REACH THE MONUMENT

WHITMAN NATIONAL MONUMENT is located 6 miles west of Walla Walla and 3 miles west of College Place, Wash. It can be reached directly by county road from these communities and by a connecting road from U. S. Highway No. 410, which is three-fourths of a mile north of the monument. Rail, bus, and airline facilities are available at Walla Walla.

Public Service and Facilities to Visitors

VISITORS to Whitman National Monument will wish to visit the sites of the mission buildings, the great grave, and the monument on the hill. Exhibits, consisting largely of artifacts found during archeological excavations, are on display in the temporary laboratory building at the mission site. Guide service is available daily throughout the summer season from 8 a. m. to 4:30 p. m., and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons during the remainder of the year. Picnic, restaurant, and housing facilities may be had in Walla Walla and nearby towns. It is possible to visit the monument throughout the year.

Administration

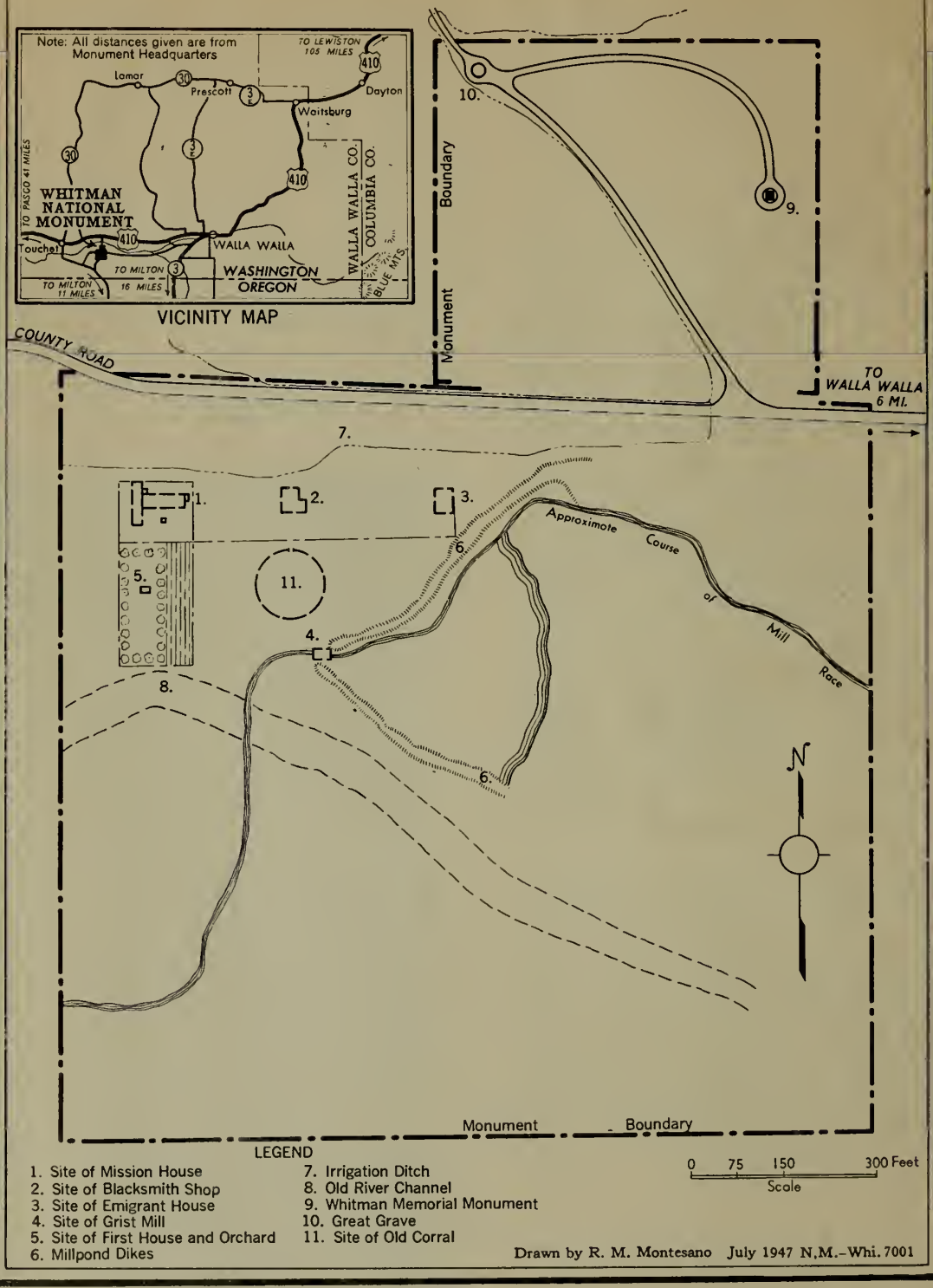
WHITMAN NATIONAL MONUMENT is a part of the National Park System, owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. It is under the immediate supervision of a custodian. For additional information address: The Custodian, Whitman National Monument, Walla Walla, Wash.

The monument erected in 1897 to commemorate the Whitmans.

WHITMAN NATIONAL MONUMENT

WASHINGTON

VICINITY MAP



LEGEND

1. Site of Mission House
2. Site of Blacksmith Shop
3. Site of Emigrant House
4. Site of Grist Mill
5. Site of First House and Orchard
6. Millpond Dikes
7. Irrigation Ditch
8. Old River Channel
9. Whitman Memorial Monument
10. Great Grave
11. Site of Old Corral

0 75 150 300 Feet
Scale

Drawn by R. M. Montesano July 1947 N.M.-Whi. 7001

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